Oshima's *Violence at Noon* (1966) and *Band of Ninjas* (1967) are notable for containing over 2000 separate shots with an average length of some 2.7 seconds. That's an impressive rush of imagery but not one to daunt fans of Warren Sonbert, whose recent work is currently surveyed at the Whitney. Sonbert, 36, first attracted attention as an N.Y.U. undergraduate with his rock-scored, movie-intoxicated, uncannily nostalgic "documentaries" of New York's silver '60s. His 1971 *Carriage Trade* presaged a shift toward the more tightly structurd (and soundless) films of his second period.

Working a form pioneered by Jonas Mekas, Sonbert basically films what comes to hand. *Rude Awakening* (1975), *Divided Loyalties* (1978), *Noblesse Oblige* (1981), and the new *A Woman's Touch* are all rhapsodic homemovies cum travel-diaries that could be described as explosions in a postcard factory. The films offer a dazzling play of surfaces: the title of *Divided Loyalties* has as much to do with the built-in tension between the film's gorgeous photography and its ruthlessly rapid-fire montage as it does with the film's overall international jetset ambience. *A Woman's Touch* is no less violent in its spatial shifts—from an Austrian carousel to a car speeding through the California hills to the backroom of some restaurant to a Florida shuffleboard deck to the San Francisco opera—in something like a minute. (That Vienna figures as prominently in the film as San Francisco or New York is suggestive of Sonbert's self-conscious transformation of daily life into a spinning, effervescent waltz.)

In a 1979 lecture that's included as part of a five-piece Sonbert dossier in the new issue of *Film Culture*, Sonbert extolls Brakhage (absolute freedom) and Sirk (brilliant mise-en-scène) over Eisenstein (manipulative editing). The inference is that his own movies are "arguments," constructed around a narrative-philosophical subtext. This is to invite a close interrogation that, kinetic as they are, I'm not convinced the films are rigorous enough to sustain.